

Sewells Orchard Pond Repair Public Meeting

Presented by

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Today's Outline

- Introduce County Team
- Brief Recap from October 2022 Meeting
- Review Community Comments
- Summarize Proposed Design Approach
- Next Steps
- Q & A

* Please hold all questions to the end of the presentation *

Project Team

- County Dept of Public Works
- County Dept of Recreation and Parks (DRP)
- Design Consultant
- Environmental Specialist
- Contractor
- County Administration

Project Goals

- Public Safety
- Design must meet regulatory requirements
- Minimize impact to ecosystem, wildlife, and plant life – during and after construction
- Aesthetics – minimize visual impacts
- Minimize impact to pathways
- Minimize disturbances during construction

Summary of Community Response

- Thank you to everyone who sent in comments to express their concerns and suggestions
- We got a lot of comments plus we noted comments made at the October 2022 public meeting
- There were a lot of similar comments so we combined comments on similar topics and we will address those topics tonight

Preferred Option from October 2022 Meeting

Summary of Comments

- Most did not state a preferred option but those who did supported the option with 60" barrel pipe and auxiliary spillway with no horizontal shifting of the pond perimeter or lowering of the permanent pool elevation.

Response

- This option was the starting point for the remainder of the items looked at based on public comments.

Dam Height/Design Modifications

Summary of Comments

- Raise dam only as much as necessary
- Would multiple barrel pipes help?
- Consider ponds in series
- Increase flows out of the pond

Response

- Computations run for three Sewell's ponds in series reduced embankment height by ~ 6". Total increase ~1.5'
- Multiple pipes don't change amount of raising dam
- Increase flows – Increasing flows on downstream properties needs their permission. CA noted that increased flows are not consistent with stream needs.

Consider Stream Below Dam

Summary of Comments

- Consider impacts of Sewell's pond releases on stream (Lake Elkhorn Branch) below pond.

Response

- Significant public pushback on CA stream mitigation/restoration project. Public requesting more storage in upstream ponds, not less.
- CA noted that increased flows are not consistent with stream needs. Design will maintain flows out of Sewell's Orchard pond close to the existing condition.

Auxiliary Spillway

Summary of Comments

- Keep auxiliary spillway in design.
- Add footbridge over auxiliary spillway.
- Move auxiliary spillway to north end of embankment.

Response

- Auxiliary spillway being kept in design.
- Could not achieve proper alignment of pathway with a footbridge without increasing slope of pathway.
- May add “Caution” signs at auxiliary spillway.
- Moving auxiliary spillway to the north would not meet design requirements.

Pier Location

Summary of Comments

- Move new pier location closer to current location, i.e. middle of pond to maintain viewshed
- Construct pier to hide new concrete riser structure.

Response

- New location proposed which ends close to current location and partially hides the new concrete riser.



Aesthetics of New Riser Structure

Summary of Comments

- Hide riser structure with new pier
- Use colored concrete
- Can outlet structure be the same as the upper two ponds, i.e. concrete weir overflow spillway.

Response

- Riser will be partially hidden by new pier location.
- We will add a coloring to the concrete (likely a tan but open to suggestions)
- Weir outlet like upper two ponds will not allow for achieving the needed flow release rates.

Trail Closures

Summary of Comments

- Keep all trails/pathways open throughout construction
- Provide signage re: trail status
- Don't make new paths any steeper than they are now
- Concern that additional water from pond will cause more icing on trails in the winter

Response

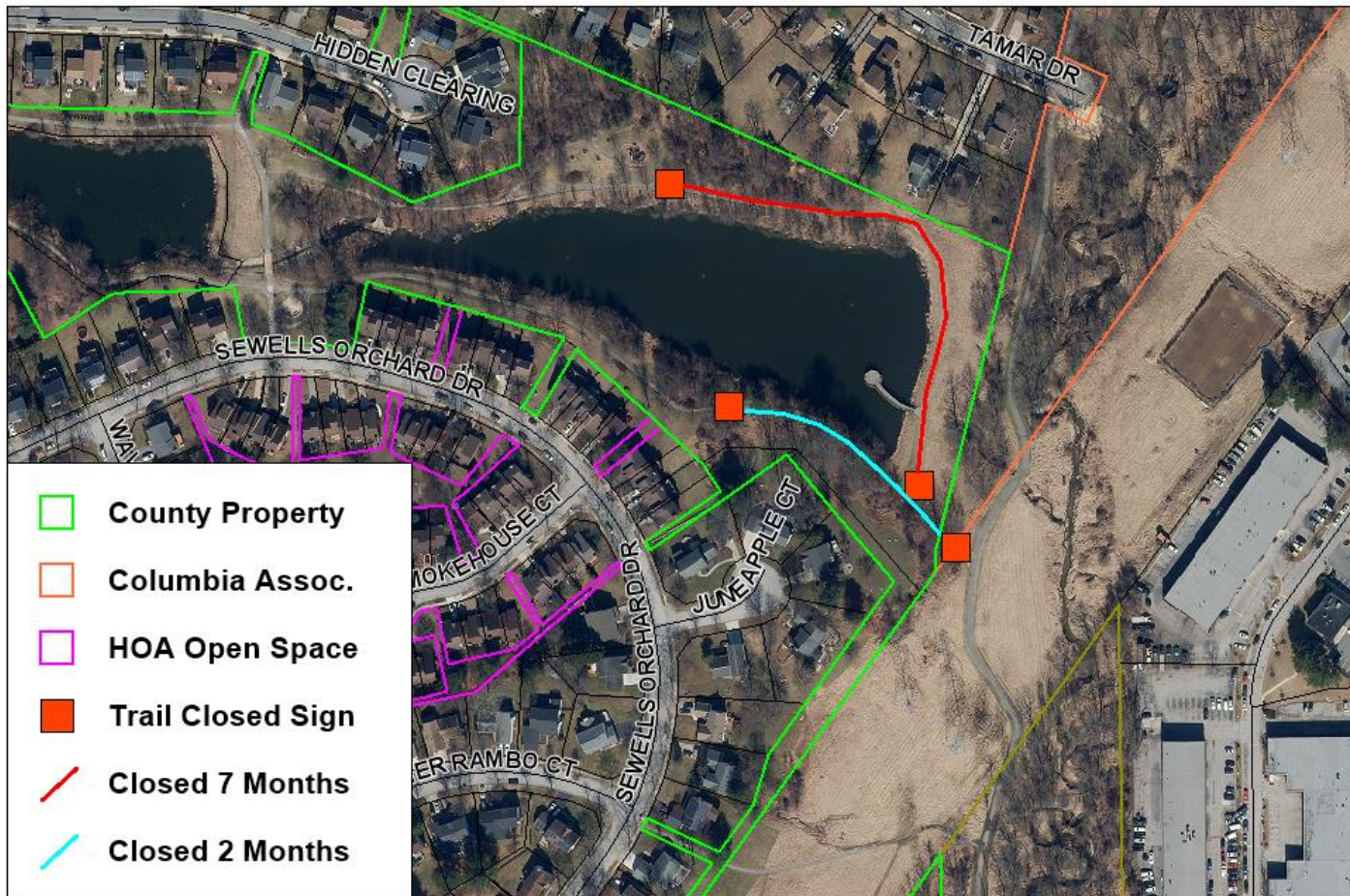
- Elkhorn Branch trail will be shifted slightly but open throughout construction. Path around Pond 3 will have to be closed when working on the embankment. (Will need your help to maintain safety.)
- Pathway slopes will not be steeper than now.
- Will keep flows out of pond similar to current.

Trail Closures (Cont.)



Sewell's Orchard Park

Construction Trail Closure Exhibit
Created: February 2023, Aerial: 2022



Project Timing/Schedule

Summary of Comments

- Do as quickly as possible.
- Avoid Spring for major construction
- No Saturday work (noted by two people)
- Start after November 1 and finish by Spring.
- Minimize truck noise and backup alerts. Condense noise to specific time frames

Response

- Current schedule 7 months. Tentative start ~August to be done by March 1.
- Backup alerts for worker safety. OSHA requirement.

Project Timing/Schedule (Cont.)

- Current estimate – 7 months (weather dependent)
- 5 days a week – 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM (max 9 hours/day)
- March 1 – June 15 stream closure period restriction for small area at pond outfall
- We will try to avoid construction during the Spring to the extent practical

Construction Traffic

Summary of Comments

- Minimize truck traffic
- Split traffic between Tamar Drive and Majors Lane
- Consider worker parking and port-a-pot location

Response

- Truck trips on access road. If dam 1.5' higher than existing = 273 truck loads (546 trips if count in/out separately). Additional loads/trips for aquatic benches.
- Will try the Majors Lane/Tamar Drive split but there may be a dangerous pinch point on Majors Lane by school so we will be flexible once construction starts.
- Worker parking (TBD) and port-a-pot typically near road (Tamar) for ease of clean out.

Ecosystem Approach

As presented at October 2022 Public Meeting:

- Minimize Loss – Avoid new pond configurations that would remove significant amount of riparian vegetation, especially trees
- Reduce Invasives – Minimize the opportunity for invasives to establish on disturbed soils by quickly establishing desirable or caretaker vegetation
- Increase Habitats – Create a series of aquatic benches in various locations and depths to provide new habitats for wetland plants and animals
- Improve Water Quality – Maintain the aerators currently operating in the pond to reduce low oxygen periods caused by algae blooms and aquatic plant decomposition

Tree Buffer and Removal

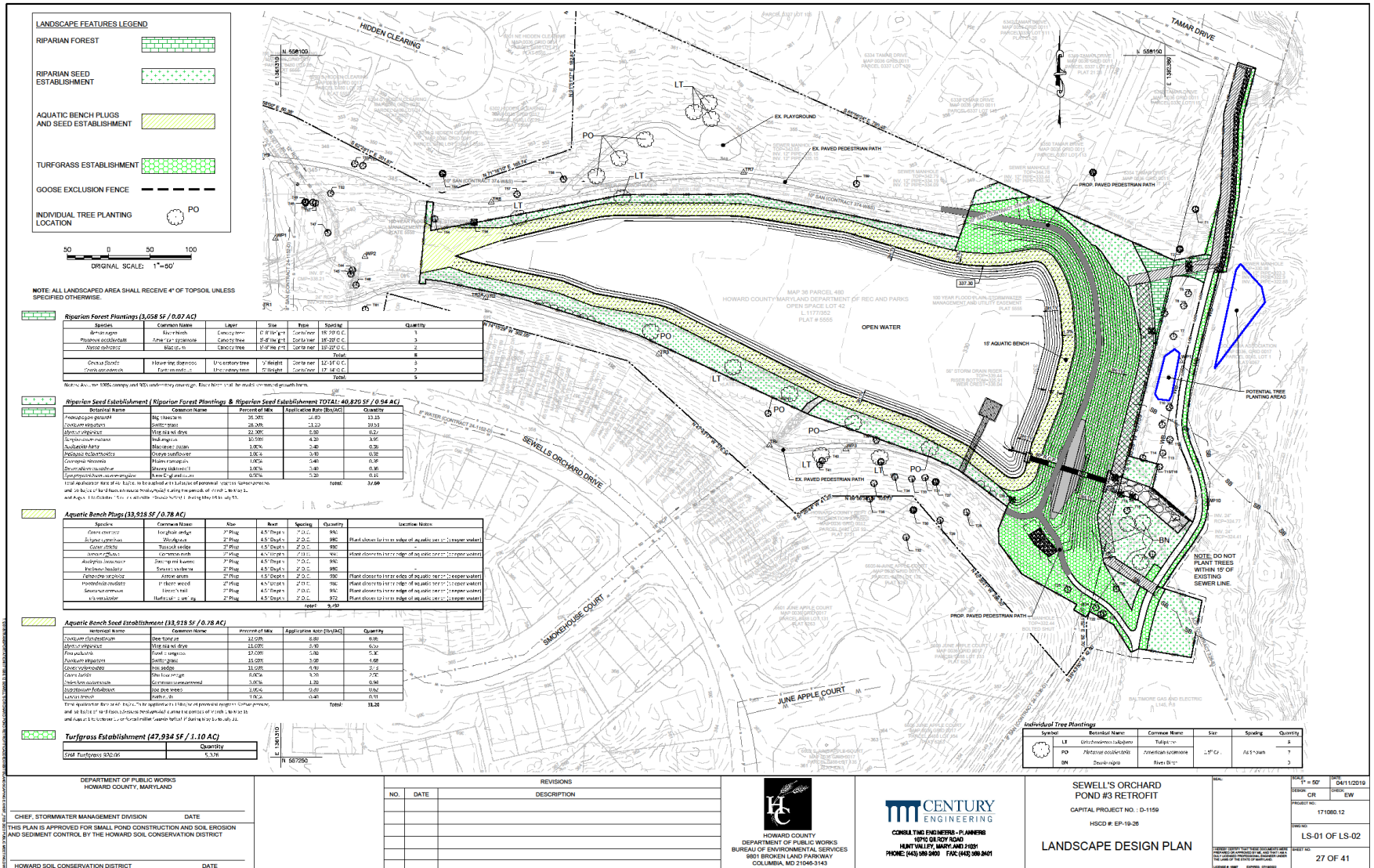
Summary of Comments

- Remove as few trees as possible.
- Maintain visual/noise barrier to Dobbin Auto Center
- Move staging area to help save trees.

Response

- Survey stake out performed and County Team (plus CA) walked the access alignment and toe of slope. Design adjustments made to save more trees.
- Will work with CA to plant more trees along path in areas currently just grass.
- Moving staging area will not save trees.

Proposed Landscape Plan



Pond Dewatering During Construction

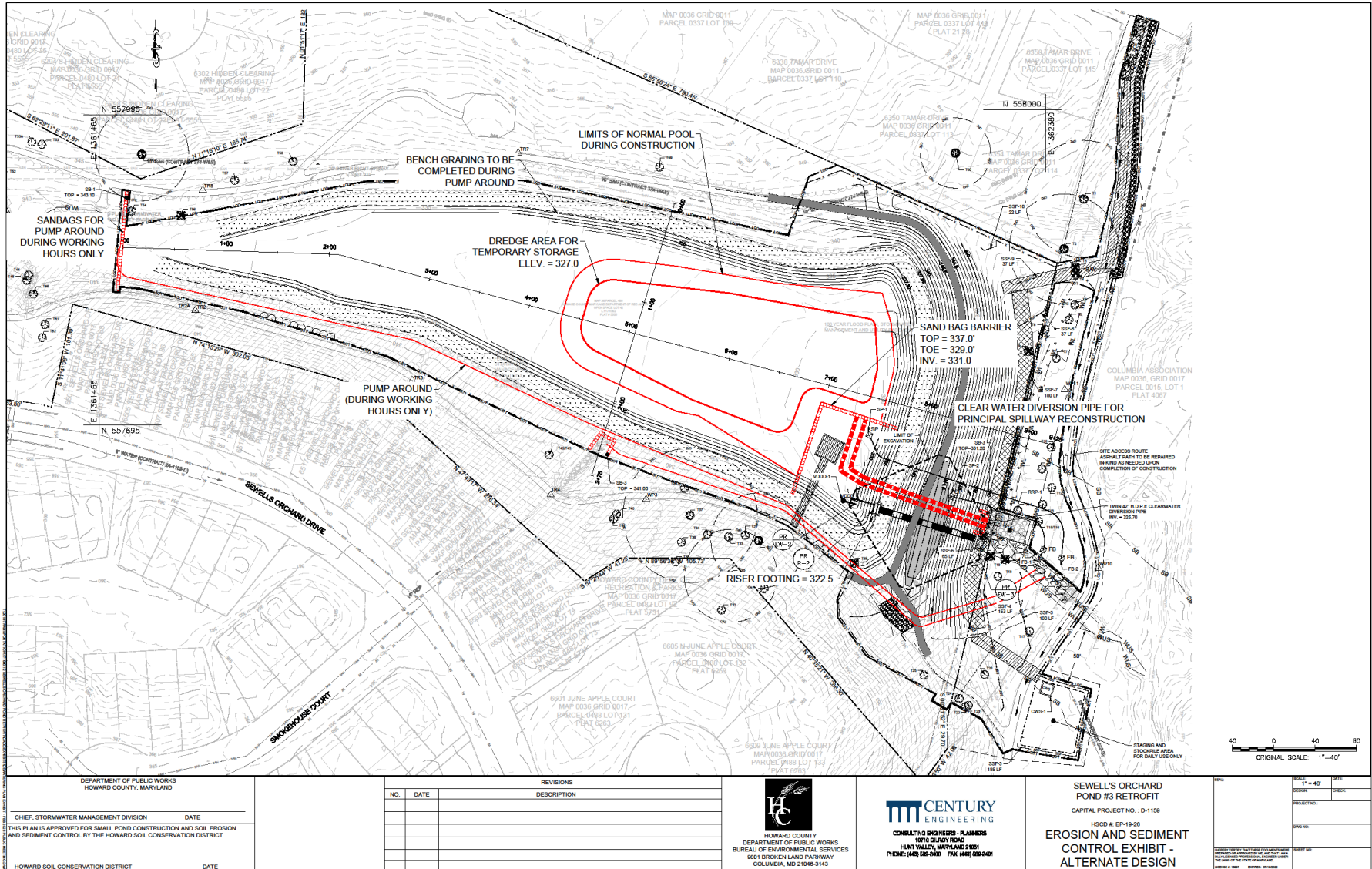
Summary of Comments

- Dewatering/draining ponds should be minimized
- Relocate fish as humanely as possible

Response

- Additional team discussions. Concept shown at October public meeting is the best practical option.
- County has confirmed with MD DNR that we can move fish and other aquatic wildlife as practical to next upstream pond during dewatering.

Pond Dewatering During Construction (Cont.)



Addition of Aquatic Benches

Summary of Comments

- Many comments were against adding aquatic benches (primarily due to truck traffic), but some respondents were in favor of adding them for the ecological benefits

Response

- Ecosystem Approach Goal – Not just status quo, but improve habitat, ecology, and vegetation in the pond
- Addition of aquatic benches will not impact the schedule
- Number of truck trips to import soil would increase from an average of 2 trips/day to 3.3 trips/day. (Note: These numbers are averages over the duration of the project. Some days will have more and some days will have less.)

Addition of Aquatic Benches (Cont.)

- A new wet pond design would require aquatic/ safety benches
- County proposes to keep the aquatic benches in the design to enhance the ecology of the pond



Protect Ecology of Pond

Summary of Comments

- All noted a concern for minimizing impacts to the ecology of the pond
- Request for specific plant species in landscape plan
- Re-stock pond after project complete
- Perform comprehensive assessment of existing wildlife at/in the pond before construction
- How address invasive plant species

Response

- DRP will continue to address invasives, re-stock pond at appropriate time, and consider species requested.
- Design will minimize impacts to the extent possible.
- Perform Ecological Site Assessment

Ecological Site Assessment

- Current land cover and historic site data on habitats and species will provide a robust ecological baseline
- Field survey will be conducted prior to the start of construction to verify and augment baseline
- Sampling of the pond and adjacent wetlands and uplands will be conducted using standard project-level review protocols
- Focus of field survey will be to identify habitats and species of special concern that need protection or mitigation

Better Communication

Summary of Comments

- There were requests for better communication with the public, before and during construction
- Requests were made to reach out to additional groups
- At future public meetings make sure people in the back of the room can be heard.

Response

- Group email distribution list set up and used for mass notifications. Will continue to be used throughout construction and can easily add people to the group.
- Please provide us with groups/contacts who use the pond.
- Added another microphone at the back of the room for public meetings.

Miscellaneous – Design Related

Summary of Comments

- Update design report to spell out all decision points and the rationale for each decision
- Explain the need for the sanitary sewer work.

Response

- Reports are prepared for regulatory review and don't require having standard design approach and decision process spelled out in more detail. Will add re: ponds in series.
- Sewer work was required in original design since adding fill on top of the existing sewer pipe. Revised grading option will not require sewer work. No change in schedule.

Miscellaneous – Non-Design Related

Summary of Comments

- Add benches for sitting around the pond.

Response

- Sitting benches are already included at the end of the new pier.
- This is not tied to the pond repair design and will be addressed by DRP separately from the pond design.

Other - General

Summary of Comments

- General comments re: don't do the pond repair project
- Someone said they didn't like the Oakland Mills roadway improvements
- Need to create a culture of doing no harm when doing capital projects

Response

- County is working on policy that will apply to pond capital projects re: sensitivity to the environment at project sites.

Summary of Proposed Design

- 60” barrel pipe
- New concrete riser – colored concrete
- Raise embankment ~1.5’ from existing elevation
- Include auxiliary spillway (possible signage re: Caution)
- Will not widen pond limits or lower the permanent pool
- Shift new end of pier closer to current location
- Include aquatic benches
- ~August 2023 start with anticipated 7 month duration
- Sewer work no longer needed

Summary of Proposed Design (Cont.)

- Elkhorn Branch Trail will be open throughout project
- Loop path around Pond 3 closed during embankment work. Some areas for project duration and some areas for only a few months.
- Minimize tree removal and keep buffer between commercial area and pond as much as possible.
- Hope to provide additional tree planting near Elkhorn Branch Trail based on discussions with CA
- Partial pond dewatering for construction (manually move fish to Pond 2 to the extent possible)

Next Steps

- County will modify full set of plans per what was presented tonight in response to your comments.
- County will submit revised plans and computations to applicable review agencies to get updated regulatory approvals.
- County will send group email when plans available for viewing on SWM Division webpage.



Questions?

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